

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

LOS ANGELES RIVER CENTER AND GARDENS
570 WEST AVENUE TWENTY-SIX, SUITE 100
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90065
PHONE (323) 221-8900 FAX (323) 221-9001



LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Senate Budget Subcommittee on Resources, Environmental Protection and Energy

On Monday May 5, 2008, Senate Budget Subcommittee 2 on Resources, Environmental Protection and Energy met and heard California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) implementation items in the budget.

Subcommittee chair Senator Lowenthal opened the hearing with comments about the Senate's commitment to meeting AB 32 greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals, stating that it is not a "question of whether but how". He also insisted that by next year the program needs to be independently funded by a polluter fee, and that the Air Resources Board scoping plan outlining options for such a fee must be received before moving forward.

Proposition 84 Implementation

Sustainable Communities and Urban Forestry

Interested parties continue to work with Senator Steinberg's staff and the Governor's office to develop compromise language between their two proposals: the Sustainable Communities Council in **SB 732 (Steinberg, D-Sacramento)** and the Strategic Growth Council proposed by the Governor in the state budget.

In addition, the Speaker introduced **AB 2915 (Nuñez, D-Los Angeles)**, which proposes a "governing council" similar to Steinberg and the Governor's proposals.

Nature Education Centers

Assemblymember Krekorian (D-Burbank) authored **AB 2687** for Proposition 84 Parks and nature education facilities. The bill proposes that eligible projects be ranked based upon the following criteria:

- The grant applicant serves a diverse population.
- The proposed project includes an education component that includes bringing students and teachers onsite.
- The grant applicant has collections and programs related to the relationship of Native American cultures to the environment.
- The grant applicant performs research related to marine wildlife.
- The project combines natural science with preservation, demonstration, and education programs.

The grant program would be designed to fund a range of projects at both large and small facilities. A tiered grant schedule is proposed based on factors including the number of visitor-days served, or projected to be served, by the project and annual operating revenues or projected annual operating revenues.

AB 2687 is a potential alternative for nature center funding to **SB 732 (Steinberg, D-Sacramento)**.

Local and Regional Parks

It appears that activity around **AB 31 (De Leon, D-Los Angeles)** is starting up again. A few preliminary meetings have occurred between De Leon's staff, select environmental organizations, and the Department of Parks and Recreation. Some points that are still under discussion include eligibility criteria, funding distribution, and technical assistance.

Conservation Acquisition Process

Three bills addressing the appraisal process for state conservation land acquisitions have been introduced in the 2008 Legislative session: **SB 1285 (Corbett, D-San Leandro)**, **SB 1323 (Cogdill, R-Fresno)**, and **AB 2455 (Laird, D-Santa Cruz)**. Each bill has been introduced to address perceived shortcomings of current land appraisal and acquisition practices raised by the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO). Due to political pressure, Senator Cogdill has decided to no longer pursue **SB 1323**. Meanwhile, **SB 1285** and **AB 2455** continue to move through the legislative process.

In **SB 1285**, Senator Corbett is seeking to address each of the LAO's central concerns. The bill would require state conservancies and the Department of Parks and Recreation to have an independent appraisal conducted for acquisitions over \$25 million. The legislation

would also require the Department of General Services to work with the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and state conservancies to create comprehensive standards for the appraisal of conservation lands for acquisition by the state.

AB 2455 would also address several of the LAO's concerns; however, the standards for conservation land appraisals that would be required under the current version of **AB 2455** would be significantly less prescriptive than those listed in **SB 1285**. Interested parties are working with Assemblymember Laird (D-Santa Cruz) and his staff on **AB 2455** to explore the possibility of expanding the scope of this legislation to also establish processes to identify and coordinate bond expenditures for resource land acquisitions. This bill may be amended to deal with statewide conservation efforts.

Legislative Summary Report

SB 1165 (Kuehl, D-Santa Monica) would require the lead agency to make available to members of the public administrative drafts of its environmental document for public comments. This bill would also require an EIR for a project to be less than 5 years old. **SB 1165** was approved by the Senate Environmental Quality and Judiciary Committees and is set for a hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee on May 12, 2008.

SB 1618 (Hollingsworth, R-Murrieta) would prohibit a lead agency from deeming, as having a significant environmental impact, specified activities related to creation and maintenance of a defensible space for fire safety for a building or structure under specified conditions. **SB 1618** was reconsidered by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water in April and passed; however, the bill was not referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee before the deadline and therefore has died.

SB 1180 (Runner, R-Antelope Valley) would authorize the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to revise the boundaries of the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor in the vicinity of the City of Santa Clarita, including Whitney Canyon, Elsmere Canyon, and their adjacent watersheds. **SB 1180** was approved by the Senate Environmental Quality Committee in April and referred to the Committee on Appropriations for consideration on May 5, 2008.

[AB 1842\(Smyth\)](#) Santa Susana State Park.

Introduced: 01/28/2008

Last Amend: 03/24/2008

SMMC Legislative Report

Item 5(g)

May 12, 2008

Page 4

Status: 04/09/2008-In committee: Set, first hearing. Referred to APPR. suspense file.

Location: 04/09/2008-A APPR. SUSPENSE FILE

Summary: Would require the Director of Parks and Recreation, not later than February 1, 2011, to establish the Santa Susana State Park Advisory Committee, which would be responsible for assisting the department, in an advisory capacity, to plan for interim and permanent land uses and facilities through the general planning process for the Santa Susana Field Laboratory site in Ventura County. The bill would also require the department to take specified actions with respect to the development of a state park at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory site.

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Budget

Both the Assembly and Senate Budget Subcommittees held open the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) budget item. SMMC expects the Governor's proposed allocation to SMMC, \$20 million from Proposition 84, to be approved in upcoming hearings for all open issues and the consideration of the Governor's May revise budget.

Committees held SMMC's budget items open, pending the completion and review of a joint report from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. The report was approved on April 3, 2008.

Important Dates

May 12: Board Meeting for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

May 20: Senate Subcommittee No. 2 on Resources, Environmental Protection and Energy, 10:00 a.m. SMMC budget to be considered with all open issues.

May 19th-23rd: Assembly Subcommittee No. 3 on Natural Resources and Environmental Protection will consider all open issues, Finance Letters along side the May Revise.